



U.S. Sen. Mike Crapo visited Idaho Falls recently to address the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA), an organization of local governments impacted by DOE activities.

Sen. Crapo visits INL mini-grant classrooms, addresses Energy Communities Alliance

by Rebecca Jones, *INL Communications*

Sen. Mike Crapo visited Idaho Falls on Oct. 9, making two stops related to INL programs. The senator visited mathematics classes at Idaho Falls High School and delivered the keynote address at a peer exchange luncheon for Energy Communities Alliance (ECA), an organization of local governments that are adjacent to or impacted by DOE activities.

The senator first observed two math classrooms at Idaho Falls High School that are using tools made possible through INL mini-grants. Sen. Crapo, a graduate of Idaho Falls High School, returned to see how teachers and 2007 INL mini-grant recipients, Tom Kohler and Sharon Oliver, are re-thinking the way mathematics can be approached in their classes.

Kohler uses aviation mapping and flight planning materials to engage his students in real-life applications of mathematics. Oliver uses an interactive software program that allows students to electronically select answers to practice problems, a tool that allows all students to engage with class discussion and also allows Oliver to see problem areas and difficulties among her students.

The mini-grants that Kohler and Oliver received are part of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) awareness programs through INL, used to increase engagement in science and math in public classrooms. In FY 2008, INL contributed \$373,000 to STEM programs.

Following the visit to his alma mater, Crapo spoke at the ECA luncheon, which hosted leaders from communities around the country, including Idaho Falls Mayor Jared Fuhrman.

In his remarks, Crapo emphasized the need for the represented communities to work together on energy-related issues. He also encouraged those in attendance to build relationships with those departments that work with Congress on energy policy in order to help produce results in Congress.

Crapo also discussed Congress's work on energy policy and described his disappointment in the lack of a "rational" energy policy for the United States. Crapo, who sits on the Subcommittee on Energy, Natural Resources and Infrastructure, told the ECA group that he generally disagrees with the notion that Congress is to blame for everything. In the case of energy policy, however, he said that Congress is to blame. The senator discussed his hope that Congress will develop a comprehensive energy policy in the near future. Additionally, he cited the strong need for resources outside carbon-based energy sources.

After Crapo's remarks, David Hill, INL Deputy for Science & Technology Research, addressed the ECA group regarding INL's mission and role in energy development.

[Watch a video of Sen. Crapo's ECA remarks.](#)

[Visit the ECA website.](#)

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Crapo visited the classroom of Idaho Falls High School math teacher Tom Kohler, who received an INL mini-grant in 2007.